SEND An update

Your views, our news; working together to strengthen SEND services | Issue 5 • Winter 2023

Our SEND Journey

I wanted to take the opportunity to reflect on the journey we have been, considering where we were at the beginning of the reforms, to where we are now and where we want to be in the future.

This journey needs to be viewed in the context of significant growth of children and young people needing services.

We have seen a 80% increase in autistic children and young people, and a continuing increase in the number of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), this was from an already high base. Whilst we have done of a lot of work to try and improve services, increased provision, launched the autism hub , expanded numbers in many of our provisions we know that children and families with SEND still face huge challenges.

In 2014 when we started this journey we faced a disjointed system at many levels. As a leadership system we had limited understanding of the impact of services on children and families and therefore we could not put in the right services as we did not have a shared understanding of need. Our communication with parents, carers and children was under developed and the influence of children , parents and carers was not clear or strong.

Since 2019, the Parent Carer Forum has provided insight and feedback which has informed changes to services. We have improved communication through this newsletter, our Local Offer, regular surveys, and when we commission services **BUT.**

We know that we need to continue to make improvements and we will keep exploring how we can better the experience of children and families.

We want children to have the provision that meets their needs in their community. We have 4 great special schools but they are full to capacity and need is growing. We have more to do to increase capacity across our school. To do this, we have submitted a bid to the DFE for a special free school and invested in provision at Bamburgh School, Fellgate Additional Resource Base & Epinay School.

We have developed our SEND strategy with parents and carers which we will be launching in January 2023, moving forward we will be developing a borough wide inclusion strategy with children and young people, parents, carers, schools and those in the health and care system. Within mainstream settings we know that currently some schools and families lack confidence that mainstream provision can meet the needs of their children. More children in South Tyneside access specialist provision than in other boroughs and we want to ensure that the right children access specialist provision and where possible children are educated in mainstream settings.

We also want to respond to the voices of our children and young people. We have begun this journey with SENDIT, our Special School Council, and have more to do to offer all our children and young people opportunities to have their say.

We know that families want access to broader and better information, training, and peer support; learning from others who have expertise by experience. We will explore working together in our communities to ensure our children and young people achieve the very best they can.

- **They deserve nothing less!**

Beverley Scanlon

Head of Learning & Early Help, South Tyneside Council

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South Tyneside Council

Family Help and Adolescent Services

South Tyneside Council Family Help and Adolescent Services Teams are progressing with changes to improve support for children, young people and families in the Borough.

At the heart of our new delivery model is Family Hubs – and over this coming year we will see our Children's Centres develop into a Family Hubs network where parents, carers, children and young people across the age range of 0-19 (up to 25 years where there are additional support needs) can access multiple services in a friendly and welcoming environment – both in person and online.

Working with a range of partners such as Health Visiting, Mental Health, Early Years, Housing, Foodbanks, SEND, Portage, Speech and Language Therapists, Skills and Financial Support Services we are creating increased accessibility to community-based support.

The rotational offer of programmes in our Family Hubs includes:

Family Hubs Core Programme Offer

Universal/Universal + (Conception to 4 years)

Learning with Play 0 – 4 Years

- Once weekly play session aligned to the Healthy Child Programme
- Information, advice and guidance

Learning with Play SEND

- Once weekly play session aligned to the Healthy Child Programme
- Specialist advice, guidance, information, i.e. portage

Seasonal Events & Campaigns

- Seasonal, Cultural and Religious Celebrations
- Thematic Health, Safety and Wellbeing Events
- National Campaigns / Awareness Events

Prevention Groups (Conception to 2+ years)

Baby Explorers Conception to Mobile

- Bonding and attachment
- Communication
- Health and wellbeing
- Safety
- Development milestones
- Learning with play

Little Explorers Mobile to Walkers

- Toddler development group
- Communication
- Health and wellbeing
- Safety
- Development milestones
- Learning with play

Language Explorers 2-3 years

- Activities to support communication through play
- Learning about children's communication and language development

Intervention Groups (Conception to 19-25 years)

HENRY

- Families in the making (antenatal)
- Healthy Families Right from the Start (0-5 years)
- Healthy Families Growing Up (4-12 years)

Solihull Approach

- First 5 Years
- School Years 5-18

Reducing Parental Conflict Conception to 19 years

- Me, You and Baby Too (antenatal and new parents) – (Digital offer)
- Arguing Better (parents in conflict) – (Digital offer)
- Getting it Right for Children (separating parents in conflict) – (Digital offer)
- Parenting when Separated (0-19 years) – (In Person)

Incredible Years Conception to 6 years

- Babies (0-1 years)
- Toddlers (1-3 years) (no staff trained)
- Pre-School (3-6 years)

Triple P 6 to 19 years

- Strengthen relationships with your child
- Teach new skills
- Encourage good behavior
- Manage problems calmly

Services Teams

Conception to 19/25 Family Help Services

- Family Hubs (Children's Centres)
- STANLEY's
- Early Help Family Support 0-19/25
- Early Help ISIT
- Asylum, Refugee & Migrant

Adolescent Early Help Services

- Matrix
- Youth Justice Service
- Youth Services
- Outdoor Education
- Connexions

For families with children aged under 5 and where there are additional support needs and/or SEND there are dedicated weekly learning with play groups, alongside targeted sessions to assist with development support needs.

To attend any of these sessions and to receive further information about the full range of provision available in your area, please get in touch with your local Family Hub (currently known as Children's Centres).

The support services in Family Hubs will grow in coming years, with more partners connecting across the network…look out for our launch events and further information.

Where more bespoke support is needed, our Family Help and Adolescent Services or our partners who offer other provision in South Tyneside as part of the wider family help system could work alongside you. This may involve developing a family Early Help Assessment and Plan and help with coordinating a team of professionals who could work in partnership with you and your family. If our Family Help or Adolescent Services are not the right services for you, we will assist in coordinating, signposting and seeking the help you do need.

Students enjoying the new Epinay School Grounds

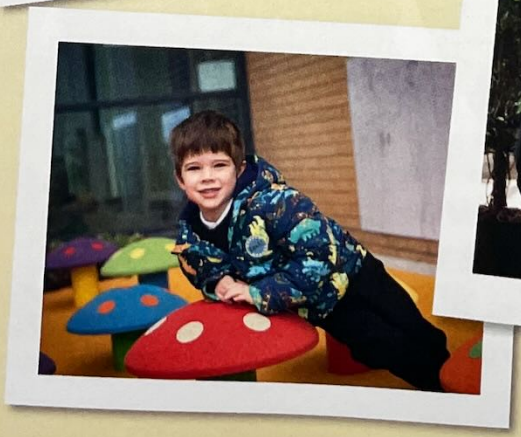
Epinay School Move

Epinay Business and Enterprise School relocated to a new school site ready for the start of the autumn term 2022.

This saw the whole school pack up and move from Clervaux Terrace site in Jarrow to Nevinson Avenue (formerly South Shields Community School) in South Shields. Following a busy few weeks of moving equipment and furniture and unpacking crates, staff were excited to open the doors to our pupils on 12 September.

The new school site offers additional places for SEND children and will see this number increase over the next five years. The building and land itself offers amazing facilities and much needed space; and includes, sports hall and fitness suites, rebound therapy and sensory facilities and specialist provision for early years. We have dedicated classrooms for science, design technology, music, art and ICT. We also have access to a large amount of outside space including various play areas, trim trails, woodland walk, multi-use-games-area and access to football pitches and have moved over our community café, offering NVQ training for pupils whilst supporting the local community.

Feedback from our parents/carers and stakeholders and following visits to the new school site has been overwhelming with support for the move. In addition, our pupils and staff have settled in well and are excited with the potential and long term sustainability of the new facilities.



INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING

As an addition to the SEND Local Offer, we are pleased and excited to announce the appointment of two Independent Travel Trainers who will work in the SEN Transport Team.

Independent Travel Training is about giving young people with SEND the skills and confidence to travel safely on public transport. Key skills gained will be wide ranging and transferable - handling money, understanding time, interacting with other people, dealing with new situations and the unexpected, planning and preparing for journeys.

Travel training can open up new opportunities and provide benefits such as greater independence and self-esteem, enhanced personal safety awareness, an improved quality of life, social and personal development and assist with the transition into adulthood.

The Travel Trainers, Jaki Mavin and Rachael Wells have a wealth of experience in working with children and young people with SEND. Jaki has a background of working in respite centres and Rachael in Education & Services for People with Autism. Both ladies will be working closely with schools, parents, and the children and young people in planning and arranging the training and will ensure that all parties involved are happy and on board with training plans before any travel training begins.

Rachael and Jaki are both very keen and excited to get started and, in their words,

"can't wait to start in helping the children and young people to work towards achieving their true potential".

For further information on Independent Travel Training

www.sendlocaloffer.southtyneside.gov.uk/Help-with-school-and-college-transport

Telephone the Transport Team on **0191 427 2680**

YOUNG CARERS

We are a national charity, and our aim is to identify all Young Carers, of all abilities, aged between 5 and 24 years old within South Tyneside.

Our role is to provide support and guidance to those who may need our help, to reduce the impact of their caring responsibilities.

Young Carers are inspirational individuals and perform a variety of different roles to support parents, carers, siblings, and other family members daily. These roles could include (but not limited to) additional housework, supporting siblings, providing emotional care, and interpreting for their loved ones. Their reason for caring may be to support someone with disabilities, chronic illnesses, mental health difficulties or other conditions.

We can help with:

- support to identify future goals and aspirations
- advocacy (speaking on your behalf)
- information, advice, and guidance
- activities to give you a break from your caring role
- meeting people in a similar situation as you
- support to access other services

If your caring responsibilities are having an impact on you, the Young Carers Service will work with you and your family to find the right support for you. Parents, carers and children can self-refer to our service through completing the referral form or by speaking to your child's school.

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"We feel really lucky and blessed to be involved with a group of people who really care about their work, and their young carers. My children used to feel like being a young carer was a burden on them, but now they feel special and proud of their abilities because of the efforts made by the South Tyneside Young Carers service."

referral form

Contact

01325 731160

styc@humankindcharity.org.ukuk

www.humankindcharity.org.

AUTISM HUB

Fiona and Sheila Zoom

What is the Autism Hub – The Hub is a unique lifespan service which is provided with the financial support of the South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group in partnership with South Tyneside Council. We offer support collaboratively with Autism in Mind (AIM). The Hub is free to all families in the area with a South Tyneside postcode.

The Toby Henderson Trust (TTHT) are at the Autism Hub Monday to Wednesday 9am – 4pm and provide specialist support to parents and families of autistic children and young people up until the age of 18, without requiring a referral or a confirmed autism diagnosis.

Families can access our services as many times as they need.

So, who is TTHT? - The Toby Henderson Trust is an independently funded charity supporting autistic children, young people and adults, their families, and carers in the Northeast of England. TTHT was started in 2001 by founder & CEO Lesley K Henderson who turned her care, lived experience & knowledge into an organisation with a team who all share the same ethos and dedication. TTHT provide relevant, appropriate, and accessible support for autistic young people, whilst also empowering parents, families & carers by sharing knowledge, experience and understanding.

What services are available:

Family Support – These are individual appointments for parents/carers to attend, where they are able to have an in-depth chat with members of our family support team in a safe space, and have access to specialist support, advice, practical strategies & resources, as well as signposting to other relevant agencies and offering that much needed listening ear & understanding. These sessions can be face-to-face, via Zoom, telephone call or even via email, to suit the needs and flexibility of each family. Sessions can be accessed by ringing or emailing the Hub to book an appointment.

Follow up emails are sent after every appointment including an overview of suggestions, information & relevant resources for families to keep and use.

Free Targeted Webinars – A rolling program of family-centred webinars presented via zoom, covering many topics ranging from sibling support, managing meltdowns, sensory differences & teen support to name but a few.

Monthly Support Groups – We run both virtual and 'in person' support groups.

Families tell us:

"Thank you so much! In 9 years, that's the most help I've had, your support is very much appreciated!"

"Today was so beneficial because I didn't feel judged or like I was mad so thank you for that. I really appreciate the support because I often feel overwhelmed and a bad parent."

"I can't tell you how much it's been a great help to have someone listen and understand."

Resource Centre at The Autism Hub

The Autism Hub

AUTISM HUB

aim

The Toby Henderson Trust

Contact

0191 816 0550

autismhub@ttht.co.uk

www.ttht.co.uk

INCLUSION IN LEISURE ACTIVITIES

South Tyneside Council works in partnership with local communities, organisations, and its residents to develop and deliver its vision to make the local area an outstanding place to live, invest and bring up families.

Part of the Councils' offer in achieving this is providing diverse and high-quality culture and leisure opportunities that are accessible and inclusive for all.

Following feedback from families through our surveys, listening events and the SEND Local Offer, we have then worked with families in the local area to find out more about inclusion for children, young people with SEND and their families in culture & leisure services across the local area.

There were two parts to this project, a pilot of exclusive swimming at Jarrow Community Pool and a Mystery Shopper Activity that saw families attend culture and leisure activities across the local area and providing feedback on their experience.

Families told us that South Tyneside Council provides a range of culture and leisure activities that are inclusive for the whole family. Staff across all locations are welcoming, knowledgeable, understanding, friendly and strive to make the activities available enjoyable for all. The facilities available ensure everyone can be involved in all opportunities.

We have used feedback from this and have implemented some changes and are looking at what else we can do to make the local area and outstanding place to live for children and young people with SEND and their families.

Staff engagement and knowledge impacts the experience you have. Staff that are passionate about their service, knowledgeable and able to adapt to children and young people's needs makes your experience positive and memorable.

Spending quality time together as a family is important to you. Being able to access activities as a family highlighted by families who took part.

Communicating with services and getting the information you need is vital. Speaking with services directly means that your child's needs can be met, and you can make informed decisions.

Accessing culture and leisure activities has a positive impact on your child/young person. Families taking part reported how much fun their child(ren) had and how this increased in their confidence.

You want to be able to experience activities locally. Some families are limited due to transport, you want facilities that are catered towards children/young people with SEND, like sensory rooms and changing spaces.

You want others to be empathetic and understanding of the needs of children and young people with SEND. You told us that exclusive sessions prevent the potential for judgement or perceived judgement from other families.

Recognition that 'All Access, Anytime' is not accessible for all. Some children and young people do require exclusive sessions to enable control of the environment which can make or break an activity for some.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Communication & Information Sharing:

We're looking at how we can improve the way information about activities in the local area for children and young people with SEND are advertised. We've introduced a lot of new ways of keeping in touch with you such as this newsletter, the new SEND Local Offer and our social media channels, but we are keen to keep improving.

Park's & Play Areas:

After evaluation of the current equipment in our local parks and the Council have agreed funding to increase the specialist/accessible and inclusive equipment in our parks and play areas.

We've met with young people, conducted a survey with residents and liaised with South Tyneside Parent Carer Forum to look at the types of equipment we should install and where it should go.

This is an exciting new development, and we will be sharing more about this with you in the next newsletter.

Exclusive Sessions

Thanks to your feedback, we now have exclusive SEND family swimming as a permanent fixture, and we are working with services across the council to expand this to other activities like the Simonside Climbing Wall.

You can find out more about our exclusive sessions through the SEND Local Offer

www.sendlocaloffer.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/9426/Exclusive-family-swim-sessions

Foxden

Foxden is a short break service in South Tyneside that provides respite care for young people aged between 7 and 18 years old.

The service prides itself on having a can-do attitude and offering solutions whenever possible. The most recent example of this was during Covid when the service adapted several times in consultation with families, the Childrens Disability Team and leaders to provide care for as many families as possible in a safe and proactive way. One example was providing 4 short breaks a day for individual children who were receiving no other help. Collecting medicine and shopping for isolating families who had no other help.

Foxden works collaboratively with families to ensure that introductions and stays happen at a pace that is comfortable to them. Young people are matched carefully with others to ensure that stays are happy for all involved.

Foxden has been so supportive of our family, the transition to attending the service has been absolutely brilliant and they cannot be faulted' Anonymous Parent Carer

'Thank you to Jacquie for the advice and support offered during yesterday's phone call, It has been a tough week and Jacquie was very understanding' Anonymous Parent Carer

'Staff at Foxden keep us well informed as to what is happening with the children and young people we work with
(Social work staff feedback)

The service provides regular case recording updates (especially around the Covid pandemic) in regard to their contact with families and young people. This was a fantastic way for us to work together during a very difficult time to maintain contact with families who were potentially struggling due to the impact on resources.

For further information

If you would like to know any further information, please give us a call or send us an email. We hope to speak to you soon.

0191 4246446

Jacqueline.sykes@southtyneside.gov.uk

Get involved

For the SEND Local Offer to develop and grow, we need you to be involved. Current opportunities are below, and you can find out more about these by contacting:

0191 424 7778

SENDlocaloffer@southtyneside.gov.uk

www.southtyneside.gov.uk/SENDLocalOffer

@localoffersouthtyneside

SEND Exclusive Family Swimming

Jarrow Community Pool, Saturdays 1.30pm – 2.30pm

Sessions are free for the whole family, to find out more and how to book

https://sendlocaloffer.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/9426/

SEND Local Offer

The SEND Local Offer is the central information point for all things SEND. You can find up to date information and services available to support you and your family.

Scan here

Engagement Events

Get information and updates on developments, ask questions, and share experiences. These are always advertised on the SEND Local Offer website and Facebook page

www.southtyneside.gov.uk/SENDLocalOffer

@localoffersouthtyneside

Watch this Space

This year we will be hosting our first SEND Local Offer Fair.

There will be workshops, guest speakers and more...

Keep up to date on the SEND Local Offer website and social media pages.

APPROVED BY PARENTS ✓

Parent Carers READ

(Read, Edit, Approve, Distribute)

We want all our communication to be effective. This means removing the jargon and making sure that it is easy to understand. The best way to do this is by having you read, edit, and approve our policies guides and more. Look for the Parent/Carer stamp of approval.

South Tyneside Parent Carer Forum

Uniting voices in the SEND Community

Who are we?

We are an independent group of parents and carers of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities in South Tyneside. We work in partnership with key organisations to ensure the needs of the child are at the heart of all services. We offer the benefit of lived experience and understand the challenges parents and carers often face.

What do we do?

We work collaboratively to give parents and carers of young people (aged 0-25) a unified voice, to guide service providers and commissioners in the conception, design and implementation of services across health, education and social care, ultimately improving the lives of young people and their families in our area.

We aim to enable parents/carers to share their knowledge of what works and what doesn't work so well; and to help service providers and commissioners focus their efforts on effective, high quality support. The Forum also signposts parents to advice and information, to help them through their journey as carers of a disabled child or young person.

> Together we can shape the future

Becoming a member of our forum increases our collective voice and strength.

Come and join us, and sign up to be a member on our website

contact www.stpcf.org/ @stparentcarerforum st_parent_carer_forum